

**CLAIMS**

We claim:

1. A method of creating an education simulation having a character for a learner to interact with, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a simulation interface through a simulation software code, wherein the character appears within the simulation interface;

providing a data storage area for storing at least one trait of the character, the at least one trait having a trait value,

communicating possible statements and/or actions through the simulation interface to the learner;

receiving from the learner a chosen statement or action from the possible statements and/or actions;

responding to the statement or action chosen by the learner by providing a character response by the character, wherein the character response provided is determined by the trait value of the at least one trait; and,

generating new possible statements and/or actions for the learner contained within the data storage area.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the data storage area stores a plurality of character traits which together reflect a state of mind of the character.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the data storage area stores a plurality of character traits which together reflect a personality of the character.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one character trait is a desire to buy a product or a service.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the data storage area is a dynamic data model.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the dynamic data model is independent of the simulation software code.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the trait value of the at least one trait is calculated by adding a previous trait value with a trait change value for the at least one trait.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the trait change value for the at least one trait is calculated by adding a previous trait change value with an effect force.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the effect force is determined by whether the learner has selected a neutral statement or action.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein the effect force is determined by whether the learner has identified a problem.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein the effect force is determined by whether the learner has identified a solution.

12. The method of claim 8 wherein the effect force is determined by whether the learner has identified a solution after the learner has met a problem threshold value.

13. The method of claim 8 wherein the effect force is determined by whether the learner has identified a correct answer.

14. The method of claim 8 wherein the effect force is determined by whether the learner has identified an incorrect answer.

15. The method of claim 10, 11, 12, 13, or 14 wherein the respective effect force depends on at least one predetermined value that is selectable by a designer.

16. The method of claim 8 wherein the effect force is determined by a decay.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the decay is negative when the learner has positively impacted the trait value.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein the decay is positive when the learner has negatively impacted the trait value.

19. The method of claim 16, 17, or 18 wherein the decay has a rate and direction that are selectable by a designer.

20. The method of claim 1 wherein the trait value has a minimum trait value, a maximum trait value, and a default trait value.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the trait value has a minimum limit threshold value and a maximum limit threshold value, wherein it becomes more difficult for the learner to have a trait value that reaches the minimum trait value once the trait value reaches the minimum limit threshold, and wherein it becomes more difficult for the learner to have a trait value that reaches the maximum trait value once the trait value reaches the maximum limit threshold.

22. The method of claim 1 wherein the character has a learner trait value and a competitor trait value, and wherein the learner competes with a competitor, the learner attempting to raise the learner trait value and the competitor attempting to raise the competitor trait value of the character.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein when the competitor trait value raises, the learner trait value is negatively affected.

24. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one trait has a rate of change.

25. The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one trait has a direction of change.

26. The method of claim 24 or 25 wherein the rate of change and the direction of change each have a minimum, a maximum, and a default value.

27. A method of creating a response by a character within an education simulation for a learner, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a data storage area for storing at least one trait of the character, the at least one trait having a trait value,

receiving from the learner a chosen statement or action;

responding to the statement or action chosen by the learner by providing a character response by the character, wherein the character response provided is determined by the trait value of the at least one trait.

28. A system for creating a response by a character within an education simulation for a learner, the system comprising:

a data storage area for storing at least one trait of the character, the at least one trait having a trait value,

a first code segment for receiving from the learner a chosen statement or action;

a second code segment responding to the statement or action chosen by the learner by providing a character response by the character, wherein the character response provided is determined by the trait value of the at least one trait.

29. A method of creating a data structure for a character trait of a character for a conversation based educational simulation for a learner, the method comprising the steps of:

providing character trait data structure editing software;

creating a data structure comprising a set of initial values for the character trait, a set of personalization variables for the character which cause the character to respond in a particular manner to selections of the learner, and set of effect values for use within the calculation of a trait value for the character trait in response to the selections of the learner.

30. A system for creating a data structure for a character trait of a character for a conversation based educational simulation for a learner, the system comprising:

character trait data structure editing software;

a data structure comprising a set of initial values for the character trait, a set of personalization variables for the character which cause the character to respond in a particular manner to selections of the learner, and set of effect values for use within the calculation of a trait value for the character trait in response to the selections of the learner.